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ADDRESS

Of the Commission of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland, to the Members of that Church.

BELoved BRETHREN,

We, the Commission of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in connexion with the Church of Scotland, seeking with watchful anxiety the blameless deportment and spiritual safety of those whose eternal interests we are appointed to study and promote, deem it proper in these times of trouble and danger, to admonish you in a more formal manner, of the necessity of your exemplifying the duties of your Christian profession. It concerns us at all times to know that you adorn the doctrine of your Redeemer, more especially at present, when it is so urgently required that you manifest your love of peace and love of order, your restraint of every violent and unworthy passion, and your confidence in the gracious providence of God. We therefore beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, and that you cause your light to shine before men, by showing forth your sobriety of judgment, and peaceableness of disposition,—your regard to the high example and the precepts of your Lord, in your forbearance, your long-suffering, your charity and your mercy.

We trust, dear brethren, that you are sufficiently acquainted with the Word of God to know that none of our religious duties is more distinctly taught, and more strongly enforced, than is the duty of obedience to Rulers. We are commanded to fear God and honor the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change, to give honor to whom honor is due, and tribute to whom tribute is due. Submit yourselves, says the Apostle, to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake: Thou shalt not speak evil of the Rulers of the people. Nor will the many and pointed declarations on this matter appear of small value to those who think aught of the blessing of Civil Government to the well being of mankind. Appreciate, then, the blessings which you enjoy; continue to give your support to the Government, and beware of the arts of wicked and designing men, that would lead you to abandon both.

We have reason to know that few, if any, of those attached to our communion have had any part in the Rebellion which has lately been excited against the Government of the country, and it is not, therefore, because any apprehension is entertained of any number, however small, being seduced from their obedience to the laws, under which we enjoy so many blessings, that we bring to your recollection with what spirit a Christian should meet the trial to which a distracted state of society subjects him.

A threatening tempest has passed over the land and still lingers on its borders; God has given us intimation of his power to punish us, and has chastised us gently according to his mercy: he has told us of his displeasure, though his goodness has triumphed over his just anger. Our great unthankfulness for his bounties,—our extreme devotedness to the cares and advantages of the life which now is,—our proneness to disunion and our self-sufficiency,—our contempt of the privileges we enjoy,—our feverish anxiety concerning political affairs,—our general unconcern respecting things of Religion,—the common dishonour of His name, and disregard of His laws and worship,—Are these not sins which called for his chastisement? We that have sowed the wind, have we not provoked him to leave us to reap the whirlwind? Let us acknowledge it; let

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us bow ourselves before the Throne of His Grace and implore His pardon ; let us lament the meanness of our endeavors for the advancement of his glory, the reproach which our indifference has cast upon his early and everlasting mercy ; let us seek his face while he may be found, lest as a people we should find him terrible in his judgments, and have reason to exclaim, God hath utterly forsaken us. At the same time, we may mingle rejoicing with our trembling ;—we have reason to rejoice that while God hath testified his anger by as many of his judgments as have been abroad in the midst of us, he has signally shown forth his willingness to remember mercy. His providence delivered us when we were unconscious of danger and almost defenceless. He brought destruction to our gates, and then sent it away that we might behold in our deliverance the manifest working of his hand. That the eye of His providence has not been over us—that the arm of His power has not been extended for our protection, they only can say who believe that there is no knowledge in the Most High. That his interposition, hitherto so conspicuous, was not designed for our good, was not the effect of His great loving kindness—be the sin of such a thought far away from a disciple of Jesus. Let us maintain our cheerful confidence in Him “who sitteth between the cherubim, be the earth never so unquiet,—who is the King over all, be the people never so impatient.” Had not the Lord been on our side, well may we say, our feet had been caught in the snare of our enemies ; but His Spirit unseen frustrated their counsels, and forestalled their expectations. While his warning voice still resounds in the land, let us remember that there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared ; let us offer up our praises and our thanksgiving with gratitude and joy.

When we recollect that during the turbulence of a few weeks past, many crimes of the darkest character have been perpetrated in almost every part of the country, when we contemplate our privileges and our sins as a people, and reflect upon the low state of religion and morality, seeing that in plain violation of the laws of God many of the strongest bonds of human society have been broken asunder, when we consider how intemperance and violence, and a contempt for the simplicity of manners and fervent piety for which our fathers were distinguished, are daily gaining ground, how the liberty which we enjoy is in danger of degenerating into mere licentiousness—these things being considered, the necessity of a general reformation in order to the continuance of the favor and protection of Heaven, must be too manifest to every one, must make appear to every good man who would avert the anger of God, the additional obligation that lies upon him, to give his principles as a disciple of Christ their full exemplification, to study to keep himself unspotted from the impurity of the times, to be peaceable in spirit, and at peace to live as far as the discharge of his public and private duties will suffer him, to shew clemency and mercy when the strongest temptations are offered to satisfy the cravings of a revengeful spirit, and humbling himself before God, to make it the matter of his fervent prayer, that the calamities of war may depart from us forever, and the land in which we dwell become under the gracious providence of God as a pleasant field which the Lord hath blessed.

None, Dear Brethren, know better than you that the Ministers of the Church to which you belong, have uniformly eschewed political partizanship. It has ever been their endeavour faithfully to teach those grand truths, which while they make the soul wise unto salvation, never fail when clearly understood to lead men to appreciate the great blessings of order and security, and at the same time faithfully to discharge every duty which they owe to their Rulers. And we are happy in thinking that the demonstrations which thousands of you have given and are still giving of your attachment to

Constitutional principles, is a decisive proof of your loyalty, good sense and sound moral feeling. Notwithstanding our persuasion that you will ever manifest these high qualities of the Christian Citizen, it is well known to you that there are not a few, who, seduced by wicked and designing men, or incited by their own malignant passions, cherish the deepest hostility against the Government of the country and the Constitution under which we live. We therefore caution you dear brethren to beware of the influence of such persons; beware of abandoning the known and certain good which you now enjoy; beware of resigning certain and substantial good for the visionary theories and fallacious hopes held out by unprincipled men. In the proper sense of the word every *honest* man will be a reformer of abuses; but be assured of it these men seek not to reform but to destroy; yea to destroy all that is valuable in our sacred Institutions. They have never appealed to reason but to the worst passions of our nature, and now, as if the constitution made no provision for the correction of evils, they have appealed to arms, an act which nothing short of the grossest outrage against the essential principles of the Constitution, and that manifested in acts of open tyranny, can in any sense warrant. But who that is not blinded with ignorance or passion will aver, that such has taken place in Upper Canada?

Let us, as families and congregations, offer up our special supplications to the Most High; let us go to a Throne of Grace, and while we earnestly beseech the God of Justice to interpose his power to save us from the wrath of man, and prevent the effusion of human blood, be sincere in the confession of our own sins, and seek to feel deeply our own unworthiness in His sight; for we may know assuredly that he who has his peace made with God, and can in strong faith call Him Father, is the best prepared for firmly supporting what is right, or calmly bearing such trials as may be laid upon him.

In name and by appointment of the Commission,
ALEX. GALE, Moderator.

Toronto, January, 1838.